



## ***AOT in Action***

### ***TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!***

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

#### **A Message from the Director:**

Good morning.

As Johnny Cash once said, “Why walk the line when you can redraw it?”

Okay, so maybe that wasn’t *quite* what he said, but here at the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT), we are redrawing the lines of our marketing regions.

Until now, AOT’s five marketing regions have been loosely defined with boundaries that don’t align with any other regional concept. Starting July 1, 2008, we are slightly changing those boundaries to run along the county lines in Arizona. By defining our regions this way, we can better align some of our various data sources and provide a more comprehensive picture of visitation and spending in each region. We believe this will also help you in your marketing and outreach efforts.

For more details, please review the news brief in the ***AOT News Flash*** section below.

Have a great week.

Margie A. Emmermann  
Director  
Arizona Office of Tourism

## AOT News Flash

### AOT Changing Regional Boundaries

Beginning July 1, 2008, the Arizona Office of Tourism is changing its regional boundaries to reflect the preexisting county lines of Arizona. By aligning the regions with the state's county lines, the agency can more accurately gather visitor information for each specific county. These changes will be made to the AOT Web site on July 1, 2008 and will be reflected in all printed material starting January 1, 2009.

Because some communities will change regions under the new policy, local visitor centers, chambers of commerce and destination marketing organizations displaying Arizona brochures will need to reorganize product materials to reflect the new regional boundaries.

AOT will not change the regional names already in use, which are: Northern, North Central, Phoenix & Central, Tucson & Southern, and West Coast.

Communities affected by the changes are outlined below:

- The Greater Grand Canyon West area will move from the Northern Region to the West Coast Region. Cities affected include Kingman, Peach Springs, Meadview, Dolan Springs, and Chloride.
- White Mountains Region communities will move from the North Central Region to the Northern Region. Communities affected include Alpine, Cibecue, Clay Springs, Concho, Eager, Greer, Heber, Lakeside, McNary, Nutrioso, Overgaard, Pinedale, Pinetop, Show Low, Snowflake, Springerville, and Taylor.
- Tonopah moves from the West Coast Region to the Phoenix & Central Region.
- Gila Bend, previously at the crux of three regions, will be moved to the Phoenix & Central Region.
- Eloy, Picacho Peak, Red Rock, Oracle, and Mammoth will move from the Tucson & Southern to the Phoenix & Central Region.
- Duncan, Mt. Graham, Pima, Safford, Thatcher, and Roper Lake move from the Tucson & Southern to the North Central Region.
- Sedona moves from the Northern Region to the North Central Region.

If you would like more information about the new regional boundaries, join us for the ***Grand Impressions*** Workshops on May 30 or June 6, 2008, where AOT's Visitor Services Manager Brian Lang will review the information.

For workshop details please review the news brief below, or contact Megan Dorn at 602-364-3708 or via e-mail at [mdorn@azot.gov](mailto:mdorn@azot.gov).

### SAVE the Date: Grand Impressions Workshops are here!

The Grand Impressions workshop is a full day of education and training designed to empower tourism and visitor services professionals by offering:

- A customer service training program, featuring unique ways to get you and your staff to think "outside the jar" - if you miss this opportunity, you'll be green with envy!
- An amazing presentation on Arizona tourism attractions by Brian Lang.
- May 30 – A tour of local attractions including the Pimeria Alta, Historic Court House, Art Gallery, Kino Springs, Hacienda Corona de Guevavi and Wine tasting.

- June 6 - A tour of the Flagstaff's Lowell Observatory and a visit to the Flagstaff Arboretum, complete with a Live Birds of Prey Demonstration by the High Country Raptors.

Workshop participants will receive a certificate of completion, a complimentary lunch and free resource materials from presenters. **(Community and Attractions attendees: Please feel free to bring your information to share with participants.)**

The Grand Impressions workshops are free of charge to those who wish to participate. Reservations are required and will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis as seating is limited. For more information, or to make a reservation for the workshop, contact Meghan Dorn at **602-364-3708** or [mdorn@azot.gov](mailto:mdorn@azot.gov).

Workshop Dates and Locations:

### **Nogales, Arizona**

**May 29 from 6-8 p.m.**

**Grand Impressions Attendees Reception at Esplendor Resort Terrace** - The City of Nogales is rolling out the red carpet for those who wish to arrive the night before and immerse themselves in the culture!

#### **Esplendor Resort**

1069 Camino Caralampi  
Rio Rico, Arizona 85648  
Phone: 520-281-1901

**May 30**

### **Grand Impressions Workshop**

#### **Holiday Inn Nogales**

850 W. Shell Rd  
Nogales, Arizona 85621  
Phone: 520.281.0123

- Local Visitor Information Center Managers please arrive at 8:30 a.m.
- All other participants please arrive at 9:30 a.m.
- Workshop will conclude at 5 p.m.

### **Flagstaff, Arizona**

**June 6, 2008**

### **Grand Impressions Workshop**

#### **Lowell Observatory**

1400 W. Mars Hill Road  
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001  
Phone: 928.233.3210

- Local Visitor Information Center Managers please arrive at 8:30 a.m.
- All other participants please arrive at 9:30 a.m.
- Workshop will conclude at 5 p.m.

### **Deadline Extended for Governor's Tourism Award Nominations!**

AOT is extending the deadline to submit your nominations for the **2008 Governor's Tourism Awards**. These industry awards honor individuals and organizations that have made noteworthy contributions during the past year for the betterment of the tourism industry. These award

recipients are fine examples of leadership, commitment and teamwork that make the Grand Canyon State a premier travel destination.

The awards will be presented at the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Arizona Governor's Conference on Tourism at the Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa in Tucson on July 10, 2008.

**All submissions must be received by 5 p.m. on Friday, May 30, 2008.**

Please visit the [Governor's Conference on Tourism](#) section of [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov) for award categories, guidelines and nomination forms. For more information, contact Kiva Couchon at 602-364-3724 or via e-mail at [kcouchon@azot.gov](mailto:kcouchon@azot.gov).

To register for the conference please visit, [www.aztourismconference.com](http://www.aztourismconference.com).

### **Call for 2009 Events!**

AOT is requesting dates for major events taking place in 2009. Please be sure to indicate the specific dates and note if events are able to accommodate or are specifically geared for tour groups. We are already receiving requests for 2009 calendar information from both media and tour operators. Please continue to send the remainder of 2008 dates if they have not yet been sent. Any information on events and 2009 dates may be forwarded to Marjorie Magnusson at [mmagnusson@azot.gov](mailto:mmagnusson@azot.gov).

## **Industry News**

### **Grand Canyon Implements Cell Phone Audio Tour**

Visitors to the South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park can now learn more about the park via their cell phones. The National Park Service is currently implementing a cell phone audio tour for visitors at various locations along the South Rim of the Canyon. Currently there are signs at seven stops along the South Rim between Yaki Point, located along Desert View Drive, and Trailview Overlook, that prompt visitors to dial a number on their cell phones and then enter a number, which identifies their location. Once they have entered the stop number, visitors will hear an interpretive ranger give a two-minute synopsis on various aspects of the canyon from geology to Native American history to the night sky. The NPS is adding one to two stops to the audio tour each week. Details at 928-606-1748. *(Special to TA)*

### **TIA Calls for Speedy Implementation of Visa Waiver Reforms**

In written testimony submitted Wednesday to the subcommittee on Europe of the House Committee on Foreign Relations, Roger Dow, president and CEO of the Travel Industry Association, called for expeditious implementation of Visa Waiver Program reforms enacted by Congress last year that TIA said would provide added security to the VWP, improve U.S. diplomacy and help welcome more visitors from America's leading allies. "Visa Waiver Program expansion will strengthen security, stimulate the U.S. economy and improve America's image overseas," Dow said. But he expressed concern that the Department of Homeland Security's current air exit plan to require airlines to collect fingerprints from departing international visitors, despite vigorous airline opposition, may lead to stalemate and delay, potentially placing future Visa Waiver Program expansion at risk. Dow said the primary purposes of the air exit system are the government's responsibility and an alternative solution is necessary. Details at 202-408-2172. *(Special to TA)*

### **ALA Multi-Sport Group Trips Up 15%**

Austin-Lehman Adventures (ALA) Director Dan Austin says bookings on their all-inclusive, multi-sport vacations into Yellowstone, Jackson Hole, Yosemite and the Grand Canyon are up 15 percent over this time last year. Why? Attribute it to higher gas prices and the ailing economy. Travelers want high value and shorter escapes they can reach in a few hours. "Once they get there they don't mind expending some energy - as long as it is of the human-powered kind," said Mr. Lehman. He said the tour company is taking the unusual step of offering a special savings on one of its most popular US national park family trips. Some trips are being discounted by 10 percent. "One of the great values ALA itineraries offer is the diversity of experiences rolled out in just a few days. Folks can put the car keys aside and use their own renewable energy hiking, biking, paddling and horseback riding in destinations that are as remarkable for scenic beauty as anywhere in the world," Mr. Austin said. He also said that there is no apparent reduction in shoppers looking to buy. Visits to Austin-Lehman Adventures' website are up 35 percent over last year. He also notes "a rash of last-minute custom trips" with families and friends requesting private domestic trips tailored just for them. *(Report by David Wilkening)*

### **Memorial Day Weekend Travel Plans Still On**

Despite record-high gasoline prices and a shaky economy, the number of Americans planning road trips for the Memorial Day weekend has dropped only slightly from last year, according to a survey released Thursday by AAA. The country's economic woes also will do little to discourage Americans from heading to the airports for next week's long weekend, according to the online survey of 2,000 adults, which the Travel Industry Association conducted and analyzed for AAA. About 31.7 million Americans plan to travel by car next weekend, a decline of about 1 percent from the 32 million a year earlier, AAA said. About 4.35 million plan to travel by air, slightly fewer than 4.37 million who took to the skies during the three-day period last year.

Americans taking to the road over the holiday weekend will once again encounter record-high gasoline prices. The national average for self-serve regular is \$3.78 a gallon. That is 39 cents more than one month ago and 68 cents more than this time last year, AAA said. *(Special to TA: [www.LosAngelesTimes.com/Business](http://www.LosAngelesTimes.com/Business); [www.OrlandoSentinel.com/Business](http://www.OrlandoSentinel.com/Business))*

### **Luxury Consumers Adopting a 'Less is More' Lifestyle**

Just because affluent consumers have lots of money doesn't mean they are going to spend it buying more luxuries. That is why luxury marketers need psychological insights into the mindset of the luxury consumer market says [HotelMarketing](#). In the world of luxury marketing, the key metric that is focused on is income and assets. People's affluence whether their income is within the top 20 percent of U.S. households or they have investible assets of \$1 million or more – is a number that tells about the individual's ability to purchase luxury goods and services, but it reveals absolutely nothing about their inner life and their propensity to indulge in a luxury lifestyle that their ample cash reserves allow. Luxury marketers that desire to forge a more meaningful connection with affluent consumers need a deeper understanding than simply the size of the target customers' bank accounts – they need other measures to help them understand their consumers' psychology and mind set.

### **Marketers Going After Emerging Affluent Latino Travelers**

When it comes to going after the US Hispanic market, the airlines are leaders, according to a new report published by Hispanic Market Weekly and reviewed by [TravelMole](#). "Marketers continue to aggressively pursue the fast-growing Latino consumer while now developing plans to reach an emerging subgroup – the business and affluent Latino leisure traveler," said the report. It shows airlines leading the travel industry in spending. "Through the first three quarters of 2007, the top 10 airlines invested just over \$19 million in Spanish-language advertising, with the majority

(\$12.5 million) going to Spanish-language network television. The top investor over the same period was Southwest Airlines at \$11.8 million, as tracked by Nielson Monitor-Plus,” said the report. The data, as well as insiders, seem to agree that Hispanic travel is poised for dramatic growth. Said Adam Jacobson, associate editor the report’s author: “What the industry seems most keyed on is the fact that Latino entrepreneurs and those who can afford to take luxury vacations are now gaining in importance, as the 'visiting friends and relatives' crowd ponders whether or not to travel in the midst of a sluggish U.S. economy.” The report also points that many Latinos use online travel sites such as Expedia, Orbitz and Travelocity although they do not have Spanish-language options - a sign that the popular way in which non-Latinos book flights could benefit from a great leap into the US Hispanic market.

### **Travelers Demand: What are Hoteliers Really doing to Reduce Carbon Footprint**

Commitment to a global standard benchmark that measures carbon emissions in the lodging sector (Carepar) was backed by travel and tourism figures at the recent Hotel Electronic Distribution Network Association (HEDNA) Conference reports [TravelDailyNews](#). Speaking the HEDNA event, Dr. Lalia Rach, renowned dean of New York University's Tisch Centre for Hospitality, Tourism and Sports Management reiterated to the audience that: “Today’s travellers aged 35 and under are not only the next customer base for the hotel industry, but that hoteliers need to understand their motivators and demands.” She continued: “Today’s travellers are also extremely focused on sustainability issues and will demand to know what hotel companies are doing to really reduce their carbon footprint”. In addition to Dr. Rach’s comments, CEO of Worldhotels Michael Ball too highlighted the importance of quantifiable environmental sustainability for travelers of all ages and nationalities. Peter Ducker, founder of the Hotel Carbon Index Company, the organization behind the global benchmark, Carepar (Carbon emissions per available room) reiterated that sustainability needs to be a "a top concern of the hotel industry." Launched in early April 2008, demand from chain and independent hoteliers for measurement and accreditation has been significant and confirms the lodging sectors realization that it needs to keep pace with other sectors in the travel industries. Peter Ducker added: “Airlines and car rental companies have for some time highlighted the impact that using their service has on the environment. Hotels and venues are now waking up to the fact that it is increasingly a criterion of choice for travel buyers and independent travelers. Dr. Rach’s ratification of Carepar™ really does put it on the centre of the stage for the global hotel community.”